

The Finest Superyacht Launches Of The Past Year

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their own was the 136-foot Marconi cutter *Cambria*. Other oversized attention-grabbers included the magnificent Herreshoff-designed schooner *Mariette of 1915*, ultimate winner of the *YachtingWorld* Concours d'Elegance, and her motor tender *Atlantide*; the 1983-built 213-foot gaff schooner *Adix*, the longest boat in the fleet; and the modern 145-foot ketch *Mari Cha III*.

A replica of *America*, commissioned in the '60s by beer maker Rudi Schaeffer,



stood by the racecourses all week, a reminder of the event that provided the inspiration for the gathering. The sexy, 82-foot, black-clad super-light speedster *Stealth*, owned by Fiat chief Giovanni Agnelli, caught many an eye surfing down the current-riven Solent at 20-plus knots when the breeze was up. *America* finished the famous 1851 race (about 53 miles) in just over 10 hours. *Stealth* claimed line honors in the '01 recreation of the race around the island in just under five.

Among the dozens of significant yachts on hand in Cowes for the Jubilee were six past America's Cup winners, including the 12 Meter *Australia II*, the wing-keel challenger from Down Under that in 1983 wrested the Cup from New York Yacht Club, its keeper for 132 years. On loan from a museum in Australia, the yacht was skippered by John Bertrand, who was at her helm in 1983. She was accompanied at the Jubilee by her famous tender *Black Swan*, restored to her 1983 livery.

Two historic treasures, both designed by Olin Stephens, the ketch *Dorade* and the yawl *Stormy Weather*, attracted much attention on the docks at Cowes.

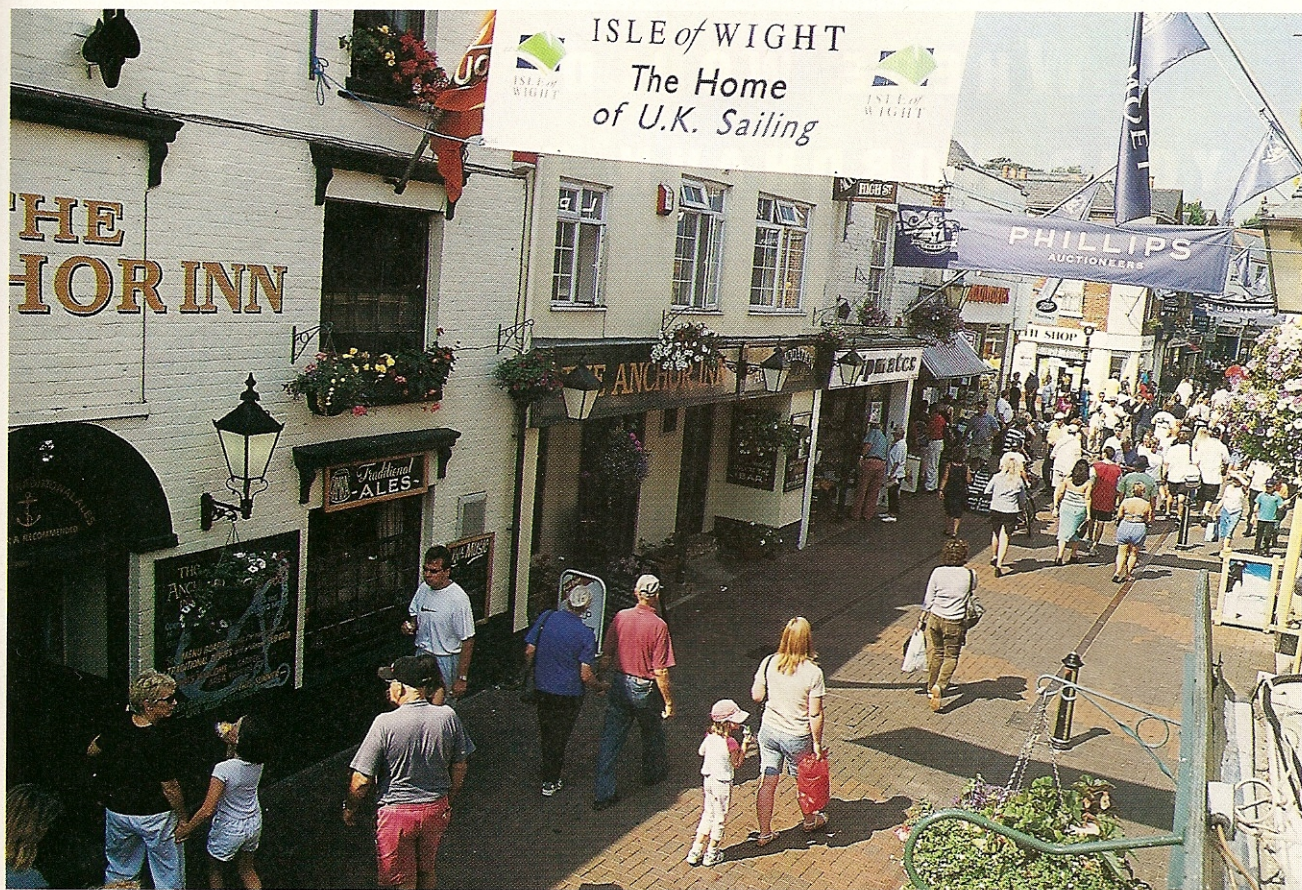
The event was the catalyst for many significant restorations and rehabilitations.

Earl McMullen III, whose Newport, Rhode Island-based company has organized the restoration of several yachts it manages for charter, completed a luscious rebuild of the 1928 Starling Burgess-designed 12 Meter *Onawa* just in time to load her on the semi-submersible transport ship that carried more than 30 yachts from Newport to Cowes. McMullen said the Jubilee played a key role in his decision to buy the boat. *Onawa*, the oldest American Twelve, was one of an astonishing 37 that converged on the Cowes event.

Marilee's owners, four of whom were on hand for the



Clockwise from top left: The Pier View pub on High Street in Cowes is ground zero for thirsty sailors; Bill Koch bids almost a half-million dollars for a batch of rare cognac at the ball; some of the owners of the Herreshoff gaff-rigged sloop *Marilee*—Mitchell and Nancy Shivers and Larry and Kathleen Snoddon—enjoy the RAF Red Arrows demonstration team at the opening ceremony; *Marilee* on a power reach in the race around the island.



festivities, encountered a serious challenge the first day of racing when the yacht's boom broke in strong winds and heavy chop. A local rigger worked day and night to fabricate a replacement in time for her to make the start line less than 48 hours later for the around-the-island race. She went on to win the vintage division on corrected time and capture a discretionary trophy for best performance in the race—one of many terrific stories the week generated.

The yachts were dessert for the eyes, but the parade of bold-faced names in Cowes for the week was impressive, as well. Among the dozens of notables roaming High Street and shuttling back and forth from yachts were King Juan Carlos of Spain, Giorgio Armani, the Aga Kahn and Richard Branson. Prince Phillip, Duke of Edinburgh, presided over the opening ceremony, and Her Royal Highness Princess Anne was on hand for the wrap-up.

The sublime grandness of the event was underscored in so many ways: Sir Peter Blake chatting with an associate on a bench on the waterfront; Olin Stephens working the tables at



Clockwise from top: Cowes, the epicenter of yachting in England, was dressed in its finest for the Jubilee; *Onawa*, the oldest American 12 Meter, completed a full restoraton just in time to board a ship for Cowes; Britain's Princess Anne and Prince Phillip were among the many A-list guests at the event.

the America's Cup Hall of Fame induction dinner in the company of many of the world's best-known yacht designers, most of whom were not yet born when he drew his first Cup winner; billionaire Bill Koch bidding a half-million dollars for a few cases of rare cognac at the glittering Jubilee ball; the relentless thud of cannon fire at the Squadron signaling class finishes; the beautiful Js charging downwind under spinners that could drape a two-story house.

"It exceeded our expectations in every respect," Richard Matthews said. "Let's do it again soon." □